

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-12

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P 160442 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4040

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

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EO 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: LABOR: STEEL STRIKES

REF: BANGKOK 8833

GENEVA FOR SENSER

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. BANGKOK WORLD REPORTED IN LEAD STORY AFTERNOON JUNE 15 THAT 235 STRIKING WORKMEN FROM THAILAND STEELWORKS COMPANY ARRIVED AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND SELECTED FIVE REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER. WORKERS REPORTED AS BRINGING GRIEVANCES IN FORM OF PETITION TO THANOM WHOM THEY DESCRIBED AS " THE LASST PERSON IN THIS COUNTRY WHO COULD HELP US". PRESS REPORTED JUNE 16 THAT PRIME MINISTER DECLINED TO SEE STRIKER REPRESENTATIVES.

2. BANGKOK POST REPORTED MORNING JUNE 15 (ALSO IN LEAD STORY) UNDER HEADING " STRIKERS TAKING CASE TO GENEVA" THAT, FOL-
LOWING WRITTEN REQUEST FROM SUVIT RAVIVONG, THAI WORKDERS DELE-
GATE TO ILO MEETING, STEELWORKERS' S ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT PHAN
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WONGDEE SENDING DETAILS OF STEEL STRIKE TO ILO GENEVA. SUVIT QUOTED AS WRITING THAT " REPRESENTATIS FROM ALL OVER WORLD HAD TAKEN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THIS STRIKE" AND HE " BESEIGED WITH QUESTIONS FROM DELEGATES ANXIOUS TO STUDY THE ISSUE BEFORE THE FULL MEETING OF THE ILO".

3. EDITORIAL IN SAME EDITION OF POST IDENTIFIES STRIKE AS " TEST CASE FOR WORKERS" WHEREIN MANAGEMENT AND LABOR HAVE TAKEN HARD POSITIONS AND " LABOR DEPT. SEEMS HELPLESS" IN SETTLING DISPUTE UNDER YEAR- OLD LABOR LAW. NATION JUNE 15 REPORTS COMPANY HAS

ORDERED MASS DISMASSAL OF STRIKERS BUT ALSO STATED THAT TEN WORKERS ASSOCIATIONS ARE PROVIDING THEM FOOD, CASH AND ENCOURAGEMENT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: MONTH- OLD STRIKE IS NOW SECOND- LONGEST IN PAST SEVERAL YEARS. ISSUES, INCLUDING MANAGEMENT' S ALLEGED FAILURE TO PROVIDE MEDICAL AID TO INJURED WORKER AND JAILING (ON SLANDER CHARGE) OF FOREMAN FOR LANGUAGE OF CRITICISM AGAINST COMPANY, SEEM SO CLEARLY DRAWN THAT STRIKERS HAVE HAD INCREASING SUCCESS IN GAINING SYMPATHY FROM WORKERS ASSOCIATIONS, STUDENT GROUPS, PRESS AND EVEN LABOR DEPT. ITSELF. LATTER HAS BEEN QUITE ACTIVE IN TRYING TO RESOLVE MATTER, BUT REPORTS SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE TOTALLY LACKING ON BOTH SIDES THUS FAR. STEELWORKERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT APPEARS INCREASINGLY WILLING TO FRONT FOR STRIKERS, AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS HAVE BECOME MORE VOCAL IN EXPRESSIONS OF

SOLIDARITY. THUS, SITUATION HAS EVOLVED FROM THAT OF JUST ANOTHER WILDCAT STRIKE TO (AS POST SUGGESTS) REAL TEST OF RTG WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO APPLY NEW LABOR LAW TO PROTECT WORKERS. MASTERS

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